

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 DHA-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07

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FM AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6169

INFO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMCONSUL DURBAN

AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L JOHANNESBURG 1433

CAPE TOWN ALSO FOR EMBASSY

USUN FOR AMB YOUNG

J.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SF, PINS, PINT

SUBJECT: VISIT WITH WINNIE MANDELA

REF: JOHANNESBURG 1195, 1380

1. CONOFF TRAVELLED TO BRANDFORT IN ORANGE FREE STATE FOR TALKS WTH RECENTLY BANISHED WINNIE MANDELA. TALKS TOOK PLACE IN OFFICES OF LOCAL LAWYER UNDER WATCHFUL EYES OF POLICE ACROSS STREET. MEETING WAS PRIVATE, WITH ONLY CONOFF AND MRS MANDELA PRESENT.

2. MRS MANDELA APPEARED INITIALLY RESERVED BUT WARMED UP AS MEETING PROGRESSED. IT APPEARS SHE IS STRIVING TO MAINTAIN STOICISM ABOUT HER PREDICAMENT BUT RESENTMENT CLEARLY LINGERS BENEATH THE SURFACE. SHE DESCRIBED HER BANISHMENT TO BRANDFORT AS "PRISON, PERHAPS THE CELL IS LARGER, BUT IT IS STILL A PRISON". DESPITE RECENT SPECULATION THAT SHE WOULD SEEK EXILE IN THE TRANSKEI
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OR SWAZILAND, AFTER DISCUSSING THE ISSUE WITH HER IMPRISONED HUSBAND THIS PAST WEEKEND, SHE IS RESOLVED TO STAY IN BRANDFORT AND ENDUREBANISHMENT RATHER THAN ACCEPT TRANSKEI EXILE. SHE FEELS BANISHMENT WAS COOKED UP BETWEEN TRANSKEI PM MATANZIMA AND SAG PM VORSTER TO REMOVE ME FROM MY PEOPLE AND PUT THE SPOTLIGHT ON THE TRANSKEI. SHE CLEARLY SUSPECTS MATANZIMA OF USING HER TO GAIN LEGITIMACY FOR TRANSKEI.IN HER WORDS, SHE WOULD BE OBLIGED TO CHOOSE THE TRANSKEI

BECAUSE "BRANDFORT WOULD BE SO BAD THAT I WOULD BE FORECED TO ACCEPT ANY ALTERNATIVE". SHE REVEALED MATANZIMA HAD CALLED HER AND ARRANGED (ACCORDING TO HER) WITH VORSTER FOR HER TO BE EXILED TO TRANSKEI. SHE REFUSES, HOWEVER, TO BE MANIPULATED AND WILL STAY IN BRANDFORT "AS LONG AS NECESSARY".

3. MRS MANDELA REPORTS SHE IS UNDER CONSTANT HARASSMENT, WITH SECURITY POLICE COMING AND GOING AT ALL HOURS. VISITORS TO HER TOWNSHIP HOME ARE WARNED OF LEGAL CONSEQUENCES IF THEY PERSIST IN VISITING, ALL PART OF A CAMPAIGN, SHE SAYS, TO MAKE LIFE AS DIFFICULT AS POSSIBLE. SHE EXPRESSED CLEAR INTEREST IN AMB YOUNG'S VISIT, IMPLYING THE REASON THE BPC DID NOT WANT TO MEET WITH AMB YOUNG, APART FROM BEING A PROTEST AGAINST PAST USG POLICIES, WAS TO HIGHLIGHT HER BANISHMENT. SHE STATED IF SHE HAD BEEN FREE, SHE "PROBABLY" WOULD HAVE MET WITH AMB YOUNG, ALTHOUGH THE BPC (AND WINNIE MANDELA) ARE STILL SHE SAID, PIQUED BY ALLEGED US-SOUTH AFRICAN COLLABORATION. SHE (ONCE AGAIN SPEAKING COLLECTIVELY AS PART OF THE BLACK CONCIOUSNESS MOVEMENT) IS AWARE OF THE CARTER ADMINISTRATIONS INITIATIVES AND CONCEDED THAT IT WAS PERHAPS EARLY TO BE MAKING DEFINITIVE JUDGMENTS ON NEW USG POLICIES TOWARD SOUTH AFRICA.

4. AS TO THE TIMING OF HER BANISHMENT, COMING ON THE EVE OF THE VORSTER-MONDALE TALKS, MRS MANDELA CONFESSED TO BEING "MYSTIFIED" AND JOKED ONE OF THE FEW SOURCES OF AMUSEMENT FOR HER THESE DAYS WAS THE APPARENT LACK OF COORDINATION WITHIN, AND GROWING INEPTITUDE OF, THE SAG. SHE ASSERTS THE SAG "IS CONVINCED THE ANC IS MASTERMINDIG BLACK POWER DISTURBANCES AND THAT MAKES ME A LOGICAL TARGET". SHE MAINTAINS, NONETHELESS, HER ROLE IS AS CONFIDENTIAL

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A "MOUTHPIECE FOR MY PEOPLE" AND "ASIDE FROM BEING NELSON'S WIFE (NELSON MANDELA, IMPRISONED ANC LEADER) I AM A SYMBOL OF MY PEOPLES' STRUGGLE".

5. COMMENT: THERE ARE THOSE, OF COURSE WHO DISPUTE WINNIE MANDELAS CLAIM TO LEADERSHIP BUT THERE IS NO DOUBT SHE IS AN ARTICULATE AND IMPRESSIVE WOMAN. IT BECAME CLEAR IN THE COURSE OF THE CONVERSATION THAT WINNIE MANDELA DOES NOT SEE HERSELF AS ONLY THE WIFE OF NELSON, BUT A POLITICAL FIGURE AND A LEADER IN HER OWN RIGHT. HER BANISHMENT TO BRANDFORT, ASIDE FROM THE TRANSKEI CONNECTION, IS PROBABLY AN ATTEMPT TO LOWER, IF NOT OUTRIGHT SUBMERTE, THE MANDELA PROFILE. IF THAT IS THE CASE, SHE WILL PROBABLY BE CALLING BRANDFORT HOME FOR SOME TIME.

(FOR THE DEPARTMENT: MRS MANDELA WROTE TWO LETTERS THAT SHE ASKED BE DELIVERED TO PRESIDENT CARTER AND AMB YOUNG, RESPECTIVELY. LETTERS TO BE AIRPOUCHED.)
KIRBY

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NNN

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